

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the specification as follows. Marked-up copies of amended paragraphs are enclosed herewith.

On page 1, before the paragraph beginning on line 2, insert the following heading:

B1  
~FIELD OF THE INVENTION~

On page 1, before the paragraph beginning on line 4, insert the following heading:

B2  
~BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION~

B3  
Amend the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 5, as follows:

It is therefore the object of the present invention to provide short milk hoses which fulfill the requirements mentioned at the beginning more effectively than the conventional milk hoses used.

B4  
Amend the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 12, as follows:

The structural design of the centre piece of the milk hose permits, on the basis of the increase in elasticity in a defined area (centre piece) of the milk hose, an absorption of twisting and bending forces by elastic deformation, the end portions, especially the transitions to the connecting necks, having hardly any load applied thereto. This effect is supported especially by the flexibility of the milk hose which increases towards the centre, since the radius of curvature of the milk hose is larger in the vicinity of the end portions than in the area of the centre of the hose and since, consequently, the mechanical load applied to the end portions is not as large.

B5  
On page 6, before the last paragraph, insert the following heading:

~BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS~

On page 7, before the paragraph beginning on line 10, insert the following heading:

~~DETAILED DESCRIPTION~~

Amend the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 29, as follows:

When the milking process is taking place and when the milking unit is being handled, the positions of the teat cups and, consequently, of the comparatively heavy directional valve will change to a greater or lesser degree due to mechanical influences and pressure fluctuations. On the basis of the improved elasticity of the short milk hose 4 according to the embodiments of the present invention, the respective teat cup can follow the movements, without these small changes in position being transferred to the directional valve and thus to the neighbouring teat cups to an extent which would be worth mentioning. It is advantageous when the area in which the short milk hose 4 has a particularly high flexibility is located in the middle and diminishes towards the sides. This has the effect that especially the mechanical forces acting on the short milk hose are substantially reduced in the areas of the connecting necks 3 and 8, whereby the risk of a fracture of material due to material fatigue will decrease essentially in this area. A further advantage in comparison with the short milk hoses according to the prior art is to be seen in the fact that the short milk hose according to the present invention has a certain flexibility also in the axial direction of the hose. This permits especially a compensation of changes in the position of the teat cup, which are caused during the milking operation due to the initially described "climbing" effect of the teat cup, i.e. the "climbing" of a teat cup on a teat which has already been emptied will not lead to any substantial change in position of the multiway valve, a possibly remaining minor change in position being, in turn, decoupled from the other teat cups due to the short milk hoses according to the present invention.